

# Philosophy Exchange

## Breaking News! *Philosophy Major Valuable for Virtually Any Career*

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The American Philosophical Association compiled a list of [stellar figures in government, academia, business, arts and entertainment, sports and other disciplines who had studied philosophy in college](#). The list includes [U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer](#), [President Bill Clinton](#), [Stephen Colbert](#), [Harrison Ford](#), the [Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.](#), and Wikipedia co-founder [Larry Sanger](#).



Blake Deal '12, was a double [major in philosophy and communication](#) with a minor in [human rights](#) at UC Davis. He is now attending Santa Clara School of Law. (Blake Deal/ courtesy photo)



[Philosophy majors](#), from left, Courtney Klousner (Class of '17), Christopher Lam (Class of '18), Jasmine Gunkel (Class of '17) and Ian Martin (Class of '18) hang out with Robert Arneson's "[Yin and Yang](#)" Eggheads. (Gregory Urquiaga/UC Davis)

Philosophy studies recurring questions about the nature of value, the good life, right conduct, knowledge, truth, language, mind and reality. It also investigates the methodologies and assumptions of the major disciplines in the university to deepen our understanding of the sciences, mathematics, art, literature, history, and of religion and morality. It leads us to contemplate the nature of these subjects and the contributions they make to our understanding of ourselves and our world.

Students in [philosophy](#) think about important issues that underlie everything else — ethics, the foundations of science and religion, to name a few. But our majors soon realize that [their studies](#) help develop skills in critical analysis and problem-solving, as well as their ability to communicate ideas clearly and logically. These skills and abilities are valuable and applicable in a remarkably broad range of [career options](#) including business and law.

A 2014 article in [Business Insider](#) focused on nine corporate executives who majored in philosophy,

including [Carly Fiorina](#), former CEO of Hewlett-Packard and 2016 presidential candidate, and [Peter Thiel](#), venture capitalist and founder of PayPal.

The interest of employers in philosophy majors is not a new or whimsical trend. *Forbes Magazine* made note of it back in 2008, in an article titled "[Selling Your Philosophy Degree](#)." The article reported that "philosophy students fit a profile that employers are seeking more and more," according to Mark Charnock, president and general manager of MonsterTRAK, a division of [Monster.com](#). MonsterTRAK connects college students and recent graduates with well-matched employers. "First and foremost, they're looking for 'change agents,'" Charnock told *Forbes*.

Philosophy is also a foundational element of legal practice. The "Socratic method," a standard teaching approach in American legal education, is derived from philosophy, as explained in a [Huffington Post](#) article titled "Why philosophy has been central to legal education for more than a century."

Former students find the training in logical reasoning and critical thinking that are core elements of the philosophy curriculum to be indispensable to their successful performance on the LSAT, the law school entrance exam, and in their practice as attorneys. The average score of philosophy majors who take the LSAT is [among the highest average](#)

[scores of any major](#). And one study reports that students who major in philosophy are admitted to law school at a higher percentage than any other major.

Our own graduates and current students can testify to the value of their major, as well as how [UC Davis philosophy professors](#) have helped them prepare for a career:

*"Studying philosophy refined my ability to ask the right questions and approach problems in novel ways. The analytical skills that I developed served me well in my other studies and in my job search." (Katherine Anderson, '13, now a public relations and communications professional with [Strategic Education Services](#) in Sacramento.)*

*"My professors not only knew me by name, but they became my mentors and my friends. I owe a lot of my success to the intimate class settings, the phenomenal professors who made time for me and the professors' continued commitment to their students. . . The philosophy degree I obtained has fully-prepared and given me the necessary skills to be a strong and competitive applicant for law school starting this fall." (Mirna Champ, '16)*

*"Philosophy sharpens your argumentation. This is helpful not only for succeeding at almost any job you might take, but also for succeeding in getting your family or friends to go along with your pick for movie night. Philosophy is one of the best choices for guaranteeing your college experience comes with nights of 'deep conversations.'" (Jasmine Gunkel, '17).*

<https://www.ucdavis.edu/majors/philosophy/what-can-i-do-with-philosophy-major>

## Undergraduate Student News



**Ways to Connect Philosophically**  
*The Philosophy Club at UC Davis is a great way for undergraduate majors to make connections with people who have similar interests. The [club's Facebook page](#) keeps members up to date on conferences, campus talks and news stories that center on philosophy. Professors and graduate students mentor female students in the major through *Philosophically Oriented Women (u-POW)*. For more information, contact Professor Marina Oshana at [moshana@ucdavis.edu](mailto:moshana@ucdavis.edu) The department has an active chapter of *Minorities and Philosophy (MAP)* <http://www.mapforthegap.com/chapters.html> as well: contact Denise Hossom [drbossom@ucdavis.edu](mailto:drbossom@ucdavis.edu) or M.A. Hunter [mhunter@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mhunter@ucdavis.edu) for information.*



<http://womeninphilosophy.tumblr.com/>

**Phil Club** hosted faculty presentations this year by Mark Reiff, Bernard Molyneux, Hanti Lin, GJ Matthey, David Copp, Adam Sennet, and Marina Oshana. Professor Matthey's talk was a reflection on philosophy after 49 years in the field. There were numerous grad student and undergrad speakers as well. A few of the undergrads shared their original honors research. **Vishal Chakraborty ('17)**, a double major in Philosophy and Computer Science, "accomplished few of [his] 'undergraduate dreams' ". Vishal served as Chair of the International Undergraduate Students Committee; President of the International Students Club, and as a Student Advisor, College Of Engineering. In the summer of 2016, he was one of 20 students from around the world chosen to participate in the Carnegie

Mellon University 3 week summer camp on Logic and Formal Epistemology. In 2016-17, he presented papers at a number of excellent conferences, including "Analysing the Pre and Post-War Turing" at the University of Michigan Philosophy Conference, and "What the Church-Turing Thesis Does Not Say" at the Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium 2017 Undergraduate Philosophy Conference. (Vishal thanks Professor Griesemer and the Undergraduate Research Center for their generous financial support for the conferences and travel costs.) Vishal completed his honors thesis under the supervision of Professor Landry. This fall, he will be pursuing a Masters in Computer Science, with a research focus on logic-aided algorithms, at the University of

Cambridge. **Anna Erice ('17)** was accepted into a long list of MFA programs! She is "incredibly excited" to be starting her MFA in creative writing at Mills College this fall. She was offered several scholarships, including one from Mills that will pay for half of her tuition! **Jasmine Gunkel ('17)** will be working on her PhD in philosophy at University of Southern California this fall, after having been admitted to several excellent graduate programs. Jasmine spent her senior year as President of Phil Club. She was awarded a number of honors, including Outstanding Senior in Philosophy for which she was recognized at the UC Davis Outstanding Student Awards Ceremony in May, and the Herbert A. Young Award, which is one of three Letters and Sciences College-wide Honors awards and is presented at Commencement. **Zion Mengesha ('16)** will begin her PhD in Linguistics at Stanford this fall.

This June marked the forty-fourth year of awarding citations to our undergraduates at the annual **Philosophy Undergraduate Awards Ceremony**. The following students received Citations for Outstanding Performance: **Vishal Chakraborty, Ellyn Daly, Jasmine Gunkel, John Gugino, Kristina Halverson, Courtney Klousner, Jarom Longhurst, and Sabrina Zhang**. In the annual Essay Contest, **Jarom Longhurst** took home the prize (\$150 gift card from Amazon) for his "Measuring the Wrong Bundle: A Response to the Argument from Negative Experimental Philosophy." **Zachery Nemirovsky** was awarded second place (and a \$50 gift card from Amazon) for his paper "In Favor of Mathematical Models." The Barrall Family Philosophy Scholarship was awarded to **Jonathan Fernandez**. Established in 2013 through a generous endowment by alumnus Jim and Carole Barrall, the scholarship honors a philosophy major who has a history of community service or other activities that demonstrate an ongoing personal interest in bettering society and the world in general. Jonathan served as an (unpaid) Assistant Director for Picnic Day for three years. He began a free tutoring service for four philosophy courses, at 3-4 hours per week and seeing over 20 students over two quarters, and did community service in his home town of Fresno. **Jasmine Gunkel** was the 2016-17 Outstanding Senior. Undergraduate Education invites each academic major to name a graduating senior who has made an outstanding contribution to his or her learning environment through active academic engagement. The criteria are excellent academic achievement; outstanding contribution to the academic environment through active involvement with faculty and fellow students; and demonstrated leadership. Jasmine served as the co-director of the 2016-17 undergraduate philosophy conference, was President of the Philosophy Club, after being Secretary in her Sophomore year, was a past recipient of the Barrall Scholarship, and took first-place in the Essay Contest for two consecutive years. **Jasmine** was also honored with the Herbert A. Young Medal for her distinguished academic record. This is one of the three honors awards in the College of Letters and Science, and only one medalist is selected for the award. The Philosophy Department is proud of all of our talented students!

## Undergraduate Spotlight: Jarom Longhurst



I came to UC Davis as a music major, but during Spring Quarter of my freshman year I took Professor Gilmore's PHI 1 class and I knew after the first week that I wanted to switch to philosophy. From the beginning, I was drawn towards topics in philosophy of mind and metaphysics, and for me the methods and style of the analytic tradition have always just "clicked". During my time as an undergraduate, I even had the

privilege to TA for the department for seven quarters—an experience that was more rewarding than I could ever describe here. Studying philosophy exposed me to a wide range of novel and fascinating ideas, taught me how to identify and analyze the underlying structure of arguments, and perfect my ability to organize thoughts in a way that is precise, logical, and convincing. These lessons are applicable in any career path and have already proven indispensable to my own search for truth in a chaotic world. I'm proud to say that in June I graduated with highest honors in philosophy and with honors in my other two majors, economics and psychology. This last summer I took a much-needed

break and visited friends and family in other states before moving to Silicon Valley to work full-time for a tech start up in Palo Alto. Looking forward, I plan to eventually pursue a graduate degree in philosophy so I can teach introductory courses in critical reasoning and philosophy of science at the community college or state-school level. I hope to be more of a teacher than a researcher, though perhaps in my further studies I will find a research topic that I want to publish in. In the meantime, I plan to work, enjoy my homework-free weekends, and catch up on all the sleep I missed while writing papers for Professor Molyneux. I'm so grateful to everyone in the Philosophy department; you all helped make these last five years the best of my life so far! :)

## Faculty News

### Faculty member earns \$200,000 NSF grant



[Associate Professor Alyssa Ney](#) of the UC Davis Department of Philosophy has received a \$200,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for research developing a realist interpretation of quantum mechanics. Her project is titled "[Conceptual Analysis of Quantum Theories: Developing a Realistic Interpretation of the Wave Function](#)." Although quantum theory was developed in the early 20th century and its mathematics are well understood, no realistic interpretation of quantum mechanics has been widely accepted within the physics community. The results of Ney's research will be a rigorous and intelligible interpretation of quantum theory that provides some comprehensible options for explaining how this important theory applies to the world as we know it. This interpretation, Ney believes, has the potential to capture the public imagination. Through it, she hopes to promote

wider understanding of ideas typically regarded as simply incomprehensible.

**David Copp** gave talks in Singapore and Taiwan and at Stanford, Oberlin, and UC Riverside.

**Cody Gilmore** gave a talk on "Why 0-adic relations have truth conditions" in Buenos Aires, Argentina (November 2016) and in Sun Valley, Idaho in March. He commented on papers at a conference in Lincoln, Nebraska, at the American Philosophical Association meeting in Seattle, and attended the Ranch Metaphysics Workshop in Tucson. *Best of all, Cody was promoted to Full Professor!* Highly deserved congratulations!

**G.J. Matthey**, the backbone of our department, decided to abandon us to our fate. He retired in June after devoting 40 years to UCD. G.J. was invaluable, as a professor of modern philosophy, logic, epistemology, and much more. He was our institutional memory, served as director of undergraduate studies, oversaw scheduling and the budget, and was Senate Parliamentarian. Though feted with a surprise send-off party at the Symposium, we managed to lure G.J. back to teach in the winter 2018 quarter. Maybe we can kidnap him....

**Robert May** became Vice-Chair of the UC system-wide Academic

Senate in September, 2017. During the past year, he gave talks at the Normativity and Language conference at the University of Toronto, the University of Tokyo, Keio University, LOGOS (University of Barcelona) and IHPST (Universite de Paris I).

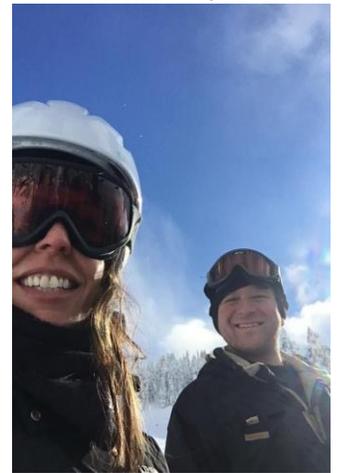
**Roberta Millstein** was interviewed for the SCI PHI Podcast series, here: <http://www.sciphipod.com/podcast/2017/1/3/episode-4-roberta-millstein> She presented "Grey Wolves and the Endangered Species Act: Concordance All the Way Down" at the Species in the Age of Discordance Conference, Salt Lake City, in March 2017, and at the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Waimea, Hawai'i, June 2017; "Understanding Leopold's Concept of 'Interdependence' for Environmental Ethics and Conservation Biology" at the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association, Atlanta, GA, November 2016; and "Debunking Myths about Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic" at the North American Congress for Conservation Biology, Madison, WI, July 2016.

**Marina Oshana** spent two weeks as a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Advanced Studies, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität

in Munich in December. She gave three talks, one of which was a public lecture on "Incivility in Public Life," and enjoyed the festive Christmas markets throughout the city. In July, she visited Singapore where she was an invited panelist at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Foresight Conference sponsored by the Center for Strategic Futures.

**Tina Rulli** presented "The Mitochondrial Replacement 'Therapy' Myth" at UC Merced in November 2016 and at Stanford in May 2017 for the Minorities and Philosophy Conference.

**Adam Sennet** published a paper with David Copp on slurs and one with [Rachel McKinnon](#) on the concept of privilege. He hosted DETHiX (DEX 5), and gave talks at Southern Connecticut State University and in Chile and Peru. He also taught Intro to Philosophy at an international summer school in South Korea in July.



*Double Black Diamond Philosophy*

## Faculty Spotlight: Jim Griesemer



*Photo, Carlos Andrés Barragán*

I am interested in how science works, especially how biological sciences relate to other sciences such as chemistry and sociology. I am also interested in what science says and what that implies about how we think about nature and about our place in nature. I got interested in philosophy of science when I was an undergraduate genetics major at

Berkeley. I planned to go to law school because I was concerned about societal implications of the new genetic engineering emerging way back in the 1970s. But the more I looked into how science is actually done, the less clear it was to me that the hot philosophical ideas at the time, e.g. Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions or Paul Feyerabend's "anarchist" theory of scientific method, explained what I or anyone else was doing "in the lab." I landed in graduate school at the University of Chicago because I could get a PhD in "Conceptual Foundations of Science" while pursuing a Master's degree in Biology — have my cake and eat it too, so to speak. That was a good move for me and I have never regretted moving

toward philosophy of science as a career path. I was hired by the Philosophy Department at UC Davis to start a history and philosophy of science program. I became a founding member of the Center for Population Biology at UC Davis and started what is now the Science and Technology Studies Program. My work has taken me to some interesting "field sites" —to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at Berkeley to study how they did field ecology and systematics early in the 20th century, to the University of Chicago to study how they did laboratory ecology in the 1940s and 50s, and became a center of evolutionary genetics in the 1980s, and to collaboration with theoretical chemists, evolutionary theorists, epigeneticists, and evo-devo biologists in the 1990s-2000s at the Santa Fe Institute, the Center for Advanced Studies in Berlin, the Collegium Budapest in Hungary, and the Konrad Lorenz Institute in Austria. I have had opportunities to give talks in Europe, Mexico, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Taiwan, and India. I hope to make it to Japan and China before I run out of gas or I decide the carbon footprint of all that air travel is unsustainable.

## Graduate Student News

**Grad alum Scotty Dixon wins \$10,000 Marc Sanders Prize in Metaphysics**



Grad alum **T. Scott Dixon** ('15) has won the \$10,000 [Marc Sanders Prize in Metaphysics](#) for 2017. [Dixon](#), who received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from UC Davis in 2015, is currently Assistant Professor of [Philosophy](#) at [Ashoka University](#) in India. Dixon's prize-winning essay, "Plural Slot Theory," will be published in *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics*.

To read the abstract of Dixon's essay and learn more about the prize, click [here](#).

**More news:** [Kyle Adams](#) presented a paper, "History, Luck, and Moral Justification," at the History, Memory, and Justice conference at Florida Gulf Coast University. He was also chosen to be on the APA Committee for LGBTQ People in the Profession.

[Rachel Boddy](#) presented "Fruitful definitions" at the Association for Symbolic Logic meeting, held at the Pacific APA conference in Seattle in March, and at the European Society for Analytic Philosophy 9 in Munich this summer. Rachel received the Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship for the 2017-2018 academic year!

[Tyrus Fisher](#) had a productive 2016. Two papers, "Counterlegal Dependence and Causation's Arrows: Causal models for counterlegals and backtrackers" and "Causal Counterfactuals are not Interventionist Counterfactuals" were accepted at *Synthese*. His co-authored (with Adam Sennet) "Critical Review: Ludlow's Living Words" is forthcoming in the Canadian Journal of Philosophy. In late spring 2016, he presented "Does the Indicative Conditional Entail the Material Conditional" at the 2nd Belgrade Conference on Conditionals.

[Tim Houk](#) taught a few courses at Sierra College and CSU Sacramento, served as a panelist at a Symposium on the Ethics of Policing (CSUS Center for Practical & Professional Ethics), and gave a talk "Euthanasia and the 'End of Life Option Act'" at Rio Americano High School. His paper, "On Nudging's Supposed Threat to Rational Decision-making" will be

appearing in *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*. In December, Tim and Kate welcomed home their third child, Caroline!

[M.A. Hunter](#) was busy in 2016. He organized a symposium at the November 2016 Philosophy of Science Association meeting in Atlanta, where he presented with Denise Hossom and Tami Schnieder Zipory. He presented "Germ-line or Somatic Mutations? The pitfalls and concerns for deleting and replacing the concept of race in human genetics" at the meeting, at The London School of Economics and Political Science, and at Kings College, London. In October 2016, he spoke on "Philosophers Behaving Badly" at Notre Dame University, and "Scientific Disciplines as populations: an exploration and argument for a pluralist conception of scientific change" at The Institute of Philosophy, Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven, Belgium.

[Fabio Lampert](#) garnered three publications: "Actuality and the a priori" in *Philosophical Studies*; "Actuality, tableaux, and two-dimensional modal logic" (forthcoming in *Erkenntnis*); and "Natural Deduction for Diagonal Operators" (forthcoming in the 2016 Annual Proceedings of the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Mathematics).

Fabio presented "Tableau methods for two-dimensional modal logic" at Rutgers, and "The Expressive power of two-dimensional modal logics" as an invited talk at the Logic Seminar of the University of Melbourne, 2016, at the 2016 Pacific APA, and at the Society for Exact Philosophy in May.

[Harrison Smith-Jaoudi](#) was invited to present a paper titled "Stratification and the historical status of Frege's mature logic" in Calgary this May. Harrison had a phenomenally successful application season for PhD programs. He received offers from Columbia, MIT, Princeton, Berkeley, USC, and Stanford, Notre Dame, UC Irvine, UC Davis, UConn and UT Austin! Harrison will be attending MIT this fall.



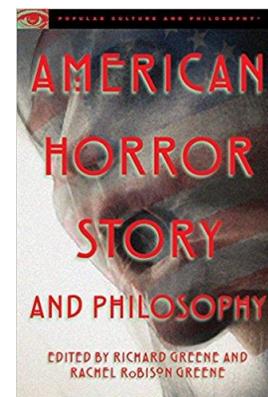
## Graduate Student Spotlight: Liz Rard



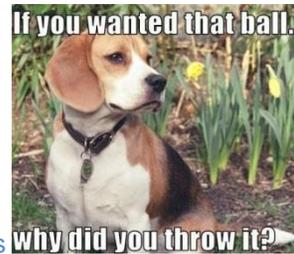
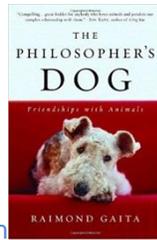
I first developed an interest in philosophy when I was in high school. I read Peter Singer's book *Animal Liberation* and I was so moved by the arguments that I have been a vegetarian ever since. I was fascinated by the ability of arguments to change our

beliefs and behavior, so much so that I decided to study Philosophy (after a brief flirtation with chemical engineering) when I arrived at U.C Davis as an undergraduate. After earning my B.A. from U.C. Davis (with a double major in psychology) I went on to receive my M.A. from San Jose State before returning to U.C. Davis to begin work on my PhD. My current research interests are in developing epistemic norms for bounded agents, particularly agents who have access to multiple

methods of belief formation. I am currently teaching philosophy full time at Reedley College while I work on my dissertation. Outside of philosophy I have a great love of popular culture, especially books, movies, and television shows from the horror and science fiction genres. I combine my loves of pop culture and philosophy by writing (and publishing) chapters for books such as *American Horror Story and Philosophy* and *The Man in the High Castle and Philosophy*.



A brief interlude celebrating our animal companions, who appear to love us even though we talk gibberish to them.



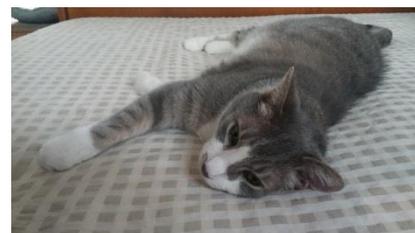
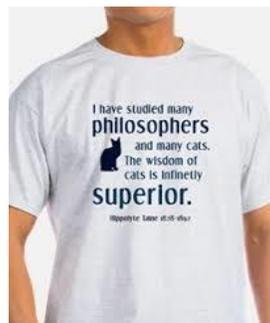
We begin with

who asks



From left: Albert Adams-Bordeaux, Zappa Sennet-Ježić, Sophie and Singer Fisher, King Parks (dog, not stuffed bunny), Jazz and Remy Williams. Some pigs living satisfied lives, clearly free from utilitarian worries about higher-order pleasures.

Next, we showcase the companions of those who say



From left: Kirby Puckett (x2) and Lucy Jergulli, Amber Kramer, Smokey Kramer, Bob Osbana-Copp

## Alumni Spotlight: Ora Grinberg



*Ora Grinberg, Class of 2008*

Ora graduated with highest honors in Economics and honors in Philosophy from the University of California Davis. She recalls especially liking my logic classes: "Those logic classes were fun and were invaluable on doing well on the LSAT's logic games section. Studying philosophy, besides being interesting, was a great preparation for law school as it taught me to form a well-reasoned and convincing argument which is essential for being a good lawyer." While at UCD, Ora worked full time as a senior tax return preparer and went to law school to obtain a J.D. to practice tax law. She was elected into Phi Beta Kappa and Golden Key, and was a Regents Scholar. She graduated Order of the Coif from the UC Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law in 2011. (Order of the Coif is not a secret society complete with funny hats and odd handshakes, but an honors society for law schools. Members are in the top 10% of their graduating law school class.) During law school, Ora served as a Supervising and Senior Executive Editor for the *Berkeley Business Law Journal* and was a recipient of the Berkeley Law and Economics Fellowship. Ora focuses her practice on U.S. corporate and international taxation. She represents clients in tax planning and tax controversy matters, with emphasis on international tax planning, corporate transactions such as mergers and acquisitions and restructuring, and transfer pricing. Her clients come from diverse set of industries and geographic jurisdictions (including both domestic and foreign entities) and range in size from start-ups to large Fortune 500 companies. Ora's work also involves speaking at conferences for professional tax groups, leading workshops on Business Law Basics for new entrepreneurs through the Legal Services for Entrepreneurs program of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area and volunteering for various small business clinics. She regularly provides pro bono services to various nonprofit organizations and low-income individuals. Last, but certainly not least, Ora is a mom of three young kids with whom she spends her non-working hours. *(Editor's note: I don't know where she finds the energy to do all of this, but then, I'm old. I was old even when I was Ora's age.)*

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## Alumni Spotlight: Tommy Dombrowski



*Tommy Dombrowski, Class of 2011 (J.D., King Hall, 2014)*

I was at UCD for my undergraduate degree between 2007-2011, and graduated with degrees in philosophy and political science. I remember spending a lot of time in undergrad getting caught up in conversations with friends (the other philosophy kids) - basically, starting a conversation after class and maybe over lunch, going to our next classes, maybe continuing the conversation after that. Basically just ending up with a roving band of philosophy undergrads getting lost in arguments (probably poorly,

too, but what do you expect?).

I went on to King Hall School of Law from 2011-2014, and after graduating I started at the Office of Legislative Counsel. Our office is a nonpartisan government office that exists to provide legal advice to the Legislature. I work on drafting bills - so helping legislative staff get legal language that accomplishes their policy goals. I tend to mostly work on criminal law, but also some public health, vehicles, military and veterans, and the occasional other subject that comes up.

Outside of work you'll usually find me at a restaurant or happy hour in midtown Sacramento either talking with friends or reading a book - mostly nonfiction, typically about philosophy, sociology, psychology, politics or things

like that (some things never change).

*Editor's note: Tommy is too modest to mention this, but as an undergraduate he was actively involved in the Philosophy Club, departmental events such as Food for Thought, and Decision Day, the university open house for prospective students. He was (and remains) one of the stars of UCD undergraduate Philosophy.*

Support Philosophy

<http://giving.ucdavis.edu/DeptPhilosophy>

Your gift can be used for the enhancement of programs such as Phil Club, colloquia and conferences, and scholarships.



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